

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02499 302114Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-05 PER-01 PM-03 RSC-01 MMS-01 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1830

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2499

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, SY, US

SUBJ: DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE

REF: STATE 220869 B. DAMASCUS 2434

1. DISCUSSED PROSPECT EXCHANGE OF DEFENSE ATTACHES BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND DAMASCUS IN OCTOBER 29 MEETING WITH COS SHIHABI. NOTED WE INTERESTED IN OPENING DATT OFFICE DAMASCUS AND SAID IN MY OPINION SARG STOOD TO BENEFIT CONSIDERABLY FROM ASSIGNMENT TO WASHINGTON OF INTELLIGENT, ENGLISH-QUALIFIED MILITARY OFFICER. SYRIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON GIVEN BACKGROUND ITS PERSONNEL AND OTHER DEMANDS ON ITS TIME COULD NOT BE EXPECTED DEVELOP EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH DOD. SHIHABI SAID HE AGREED SYRIA WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS TYPE OF CONTACT WITH THE PENTAGON. SHIHABI THEN ASKED AT WHAT LEVEL EGYPTIANS HAD STAFFED THEIR DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN WASHINGTON. I REPLIED I WAS UNSURE OF EXACT EGYPTIAN STAFFING BUT ASSUMED THAT THEY HAD MATCHED LEVEL OF OURS IN CAIRO, I.E. AN OFFICE HEADED BY A BRIGADIER GENERAL.

2. HE SAID HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS IDEA WITHIN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AS WELL AS WITH ASAD ON LATTER'S RETURN FROM RABAT SUMMIT AND ALGERIAN AND ALGERIAN INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS.

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I CONCLUDED WITH REITERATION THAT USG IN ANY EVENT IS

INTERESTED IN ASSIGNMENT OF A DATT TO DAMASCUS.

3. COMMENT: I THINK THE ODDS FAVOR A POSITIVE SYRIAN DECISION ON SENDING A DATT TO WASHINGTON BUT PREFER KEEP DISCUSSION THIS SUBJECT IN STADIS CHANNEL FOR PRESENT. IN TERMS STAFFING DATT OFFICE HERE, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW AVAILABILITY OF LT. COLONEL ANGUS MUNDY. I DO NOT KNOW HIM PERSONALLY BUT UNDERSTAND HE IS AN ABLE, LOW-KEY OFFICER WHO DEVELOPED GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AT A TIME WHEN SYRIAN-US RELATIONS WERE APPROACHING THEIR NADIR.

4. I DO NOT WANT ANY STEPS TAKEN YET TO ASSIGN A DATT BUT I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO GIVE GO AHEAD DURING NOVEMBER. ADMINISTRATIVELY WE WILL NOT BE IN POSITION SUPPORT A DATT UNTIL THE THIRD QUARTER OF THIS FISCAL YEAR.
MURPHY

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